

It is not in the least fanciful to expect that such commissions would derive a certain strength from the heritage of respect for human individuality that the mental health profession and the American political system cherish in common as having priority above all other considerations.

### PSYCHIATRIC CARE IN THE SOVIET UNION

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Soviet psychiatric services must be understood in the context of Russian culture, which places higher value on the collective than on the individual; of the socialized medical program, which has led to a range of psychiatric outpatient services; and of Marxist ideology and Pavlovian terminology, which emphasize physiological rather than psychological concepts. This has resulted in the projection of psychodynamics, in emphasis on work as therapy, and in the maintenance of the psychiatric patient within the community insofar as possible.

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### Implications of Changing Patterns of Poverty for Mental Health

*Chairman: Reginald S. Lourie*

#### POVERTY AND THE BEHAVIOR OF LOW-INCOME FAMILIES

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*(No Digest)*

#### THE EFFECT OF POVERTY ON PERSONAL ACHIEVEMENT

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One of the most serious aspects of community dysfunction is the relative unavailability of psychotherapeutic medical and casework services for those caught in the poverty trap. Deprivation and frustration related to poverty is creating a human wasteland of a large segment of our population, especially those dependent on public assistance. The potentialities that exist in a substantial proportion of public assistance recipients for achieving personal and economic independence and living more normal lives are not being realized because of the unavailability of skilled assistance from the helping professions. The result is an increase in perpetuation of dependency from generation to generation, more family breakdown with its concomitants of desertion, illegitimacy and economic dependency, physical and emotional illnesses increasing

in extent and seriousness among dependent families, more school dropouts among the adolescents and increasing hopelessness and despair.

This paper draws on observations based on three significant studies of public welfare recipients and a diagnostic survey now in progress.

The most pertinent of the public welfare studies was conducted in 1960 in Cook County, Illinois, of a random sample of more than 1000 Aid to Dependent Children recipients.

Another study included a random sample in three selected counties in California in 1962 of 500 families who were receiving some form of public assistance. The focus here was on remedial measures, especially on ways in which to improve the professional competence of existing public assistance workers and a crash program for professional social work training to reduce the widening gap.

The third public welfare study was conducted by the writer in 1962. A comprehensive study of the public assistance program of the State of New York made for the Moreland Commission on Welfare, it included detailed examination of a random sample of case records, 4500 of public assistance families in New York City and five other representative counties, and home interviews with a subsample of 400. The findings were similar to and supported those in the other two studies.

The survey is a current first-hand study of 3000 to 4000 families in the West Side Urban Renewal Area of New York City before relocation to diagnose problems and devise treatment plans. A followup study will be made over the next five years of 1000 families after permanent relocation to ascertain the effects of making ameliorative and rehabilitative services available. This is a demonstration project financed by the Federal Housing and Home Finance Agency to study the impact of services to a tenant population in the process of relocation. Case diagnoses and service plans have already been made on some 1200 families, most of whom are in the poverty group. Tentative findings, which support the findings in the three studies, will be presented.

#### POOR PEOPLE—1964

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A great many of the people who are very poor today would not have been poor ten years ago. For a long time there has been a tragic, gnawing, needless, continuous poverty among such groups as the migratory workers, the tenant farmers and the poor, small farmers, sharecroppers, and a great many coal miners. But now we have in addition the new poor—the poor of 1964.

For the purpose of this discussion, I shall define very poor people as those on relief. It is the change in the characteristics of these people on relief—particularly those in urban centers—that has given us an entirely new class of poor people. These—the new poor—and their numerous dependents, mostly children, would have been working ten years ago, but they would have

been employed in jobs that have now disappeared almost completely from our economic scene. These people and their dependents are the victims of automation and technological improvements in the manufacturing of goods and in distribution.

Most of the poor of 1964 show up as recipients of Aid to Dependent Children. In more than 80 per cent of cases, in Chicago at least, the reason for this current form of dependency appears to be the absence of a father and his failure to support the children. This, however, is only the surface reason; the real reason is that today this father is unemployed; ten years ago he would have been at work in any of the thousands of jobs then classified either as common labor, semiskilled or even skilled work which, however, did not require any particular educational qualification. There were such jobs in the great stockyards of Chicago, now gone, in the huge steel mills of Chicago, now automated, or in thousands of other plants, businesses or industries that have left the center of the City of Chicago.

The typical ADC father is a Negro, and it is his chronic unemployment that is the real cause of dependency on ADC as well as of the extensive illegitimacy in the ADC program.

## THE PERMANENT PAUPERS

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If the statistics on unemployment are accurate, approximately four million people from 16 to 65 years old are currently seeking work in vain. In the gross sense, we know who they are, their ages, their colors and their sex. We can even make educated guesses about why they are unemployed. But some things about them are unknown.

In what kind of houses do they live? What is their style of life? What do they eat? How do they amuse themselves? What do they wear and what do they tell their children? Are they bitter? What is their political potential?

It isn't easy to answer these questions because, curiously, the unemployed today do not have the high degree of visibility they had during the depression of the Thirties. Then, they seemed everywhere; today we must seek them out. You must drive off the freeways into the back streets to find their houses. Then, they showed signs of becoming a political force in the land; today they are silent. Theoretically, it was no disgrace to be unemployed in the Thirties, but today even the unemployed themselves appear to believe that, because American society is hailed as affluent, unemployment is a personal failure.

My objective is simple: to give a nonstatistical description of unemployed life. To do this, I am using the simplest research method possible: I am living as close to them as it is possible to get and as much like them as my own psychic condition will permit. (One of the ancillary results of this study is the condition of fright induced in me by even the simulation of the life that I led

during the Depression, when I was unemployed for months at a time.) Thus far, I have lived with an unemployed miner's family; spent days sitting as an unemployed worker in the employment office where casual jobs are given out and nights in a cheap rooming house in a district with a very high rate of unemployment; worked as a dishwasher and bus boy in an inexpensive restaurant and lived with unemployed workers in a small city being slowly denuded of work.

To complete the research, I will live with an unemployed farm family, work as a cook in a religion mission serving unemployed Negroes, and attempt, similarly, to gain some insights into the lives of seven or eight other types of unemployed people, including teenagers, women with dependent children and skilled white-collar workers. Hopefully, when the research is completed, it will be possible to describe something of the unemployed life style.

It is too early to come to any conclusions about the study and it is possible that there will be none other than a few that can be assumed now. But perhaps if we discover something of the day-to-day texture of life among the unemployed, we will know also (a) if there are dangers inherent in the continued presence of a 5.9 per cent rate of unemployment in addition to the obvious economic ones and (b) what might be done to lessen these dangers.

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### The Role of Mass Media in Social Change

*Chairman: Maurice R. Green*

#### COMMUNICATION AND COMMUNITY READINESS FOR SOCIAL CHANGE

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This paper identifies and elaborates the role of communication in the preparation of a community climate conducive to social change.

Data cited and suggestions advanced are from a review of empirical literature and a field study of Dallas, Texas, during a period of planned community social change. Further, observations and practical experiences of mine and others must intrude into my analysis of the important components of preparation for community change.

Although no available model adequately describes the complex process of social change, all students of change at the community level agree on the central role of communication as one variable in the process.

Typically, laymen equate communication within the community with the mass media of communication and they expect far too much in the way of opinion leadership from the mass media. Considerable evidence suggests that the mass media may not be competent to shift individual opinions strongly in a direct way, although they do have a strong indirect influence on community beliefs and actions.